

**National Education Association
Interview with Richard Nuanes
Conducted on February 16, 2017 by Vakil Smallen**

GS: This is Vakil Smallen. It's February 16th, 2017, and I am here interviewing Richard Nuanes, a retired staff member of the National Education Association. So, just to begin, can you talk a little bit about your professional and educational background before joining NEA?

RN: I went to college in Southern California, had a law degree from UCLA. I worked briefly for the state auditor general in Sacramento, and then I left there in '75 and started working at NEA in April 1976.

VS: Just out of interest, what got you from the state auditor's office in California to come to DC to work for a teacher's union?

RN: I had worked in Washington, DC for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the summer of '71 when I was a law student. I was originally from LA, moved to Sacramento. Sacramento at the time felt like it was just too slow for me. So I just quit my job with my girlfriend at the time and we just got in my car and came across the country without a job. I had been here and liked it. So it just was a whim, quite honestly. Then I spent several months looking for a job. I didn't think it would take very long. It took me like five months and I got two jobs at the same time, one at EPA and then this one, and I chose the NEA job.

VS: As we talked about earlier, you started out working in research, ended up in human and civil rights in a division called legal services within the human and civil rights division, and then ended up finally spending looks like the last about seventeen years of your career essentially setting up the conferences and the facilities. That's a correct recap of your career?

RN: Essentially, yes.

VS: One question is human and civil rights division was formed in 1968, if memory serves. I think it was Elizabeth Koontz who set it up, if memory serves.

RN: Teacher rights, you're talking about.

VS: It was called teacher rights at first. So when did the name change to human and civil rights?

RN: I'd have to guess here but I'm thinking it would be sometime in the mid eighties.

VS: Okay, so it was continued to be called teacher rights until then.

RN: For a while, because I went there in '79, to teacher rights then. Then we spun off from that maybe two or three years later, so it may have been in the early eighties.

VS: So even when it was called teacher rights – because there was the human rights award. There were these human rights awards. The first one was given out, I think, in '67. I've always been under the impression that that was something that was given out by the human and civil rights division. I guess the teacher rights division in this case. So is that the case?

RN: I believe so. They had that component in there. I think like any organization, NEA sometimes changed the name of a division to better represent what the activities are. And I think in part NEA calling it teacher rights, as you know, we moved away from being a teacher's organization to being an educational organization, so they decided they wanted to change the name. They decided just to, at that point, look at what the unit was doing and they named that human and civil rights.

VS: So, if you can walk me through. I know at some point the language within the NEA becomes more about educators and less about teachers, particularly for that reason. Paraprofessionals and education support personnel became an element of the NEA's work, representing them as well. Can you maybe provide a timeline on when it became less directly about teachers, and if that happened by the time you started in the late seventies?

RN: Yeah, it happened later than that. I think NEA represented higher education and teachers and retirees as well, retirement organization. I don't remember the exact timing, but I

believe it was probably in the late seventies, early eighties when we decided to also represent paraprofessionals. I can't remember the exact year, but if I had to guess it would be around that early eighties timeframe.

VS: So that was during the time when they started thinking maybe we should rename this division because it has a broader purpose?

RN: Yes, yes.

VS: I might come back to that in a little bit. So, you were within teacher rights, human and civil rights, teacher rights, that division, starting in the early eighties when conservatism started to make a comeback, Reagan coming into office and then I guess Thatcher in the UK and the influence of conservative politics definitely started to make a big comeback. How did, within the NEA, just in your memory, and you can speak broadly, you can speak with more detail, however you feel comfortable, how did that affect the work that your division was doing specifically at that time?

RN: Well, it probably didn't, I mean quite honestly. NEA made its first endorsement in '76. We never endorsed until that time. We endorsed Carter in '80, obviously; Reagan won that election. But the kind of work I did, I was in a subset of the organization called legal services. What we did when I started there, we dealt with something called the attorney referral program. Then we also managed the – there's a professional liability insurance

program that we managed. So educators are protected for I think \$1 million for any problems, negligence they might encounter.

So that was the area I was in. I was not in the rights division. I kind of transferred over to that. They spun off some of the legal services piece of that in the early eighties. But I don't recall that impacting my work necessarily. It certainly impacted the organization because NEA, when Carter won in '76, NEA worked very closely with the Carter administration to create the Department of Education. It didn't exist until I guess some time in the late seventies. Then Reagan came in thinking he was going to abolish it. Almost in a Republican sense, it's the same thing; it never happened. So in that sense, I think NEA fought not in my area so much, but fought in government relations, other parts of the organization to maintain their political influence in the world.

VS: Going back a step, with the insurance program for teachers for negligence, so if a teacher was facing any kind of a lawsuit or something as a result of a classroom, something happening in the classroom, it essentially was to cover them. So the attorney referral program, something similar where they could be put in touch with an attorney for defense?

RN: Yes, that was a personal program. It could be related to anything. So we had a list, kept a list of attorneys throughout the country, and if you had a legal problem, there were certain benefits. You got the first hour free, and I think we negotiated hourly rates with a

bunch of different law firms throughout the country. So if you had something unrelated to work, you could get help in those areas. The insurance program, called the EEL, Educators Employment Liability insurance, that was for work related issues and it covered civil, classroom related issues, and also there was a small criminal coverage. So if you were accused of a criminal act and you were exonerated, you could get up to \$25,000 I think it was, reimbursed for attorney fees. That program, I think, still exists. The civil coverage used to be \$1 million. I don't know what it is now. The criminal was twenty-five. There's other pieces to that as well.

VS: A couple of my other questions here have a little bit more to do with sort of conservative policies, so to the degree that you remember any of this, it may not have directly impacted your work. One of the things that I noticed, and this kind of crosses into the conferences, although your working with the conference was a little later than this. I've seen a couple of examples in the 1980s of the NEA denouncing American intervention in Latin America, or seeking to divest from South Africa, things like that. This sort of goes back to that idea of how conservatism was impacting the association. It appears, from my reading, that it was controversial within the association to do these things, because it would have put the association at odds with the president or have gotten them more directly involved in partisan politics in a way that members maybe didn't want. So I guess do you have any memories of any of that? Or was that, again, too removed from your work?

RN: Well, mostly removed. I have some memories, not germane. I was on the NEA retirement board at the time we divested from South Africa. I remember well that whole – that was quite a remarkable thing we had to do in order to take the funds and make them South Africa free. I don't recall there being too much in the way of problems. Certainly not with the Reagan administration, because I think we didn't get along with them that well, although I think there were conversations. Our organization is kind of a funny organization, since we had at the time like 6 million members at the time. Many of them are located in urban, suburban areas, but some are in rural areas.

So in a sense, there was I think some concern you could go too far to the left and worry about alienating some of those members, especially in places where you – in some places, you had agency fee dues. So you have someone who has to become a member. But in most states, especially in the South, you had to recruit those members so you had to be careful, and you had to be careful about their politics. If they got involved with gun control, sometimes it was controversial. I don't recall much impacting me directly, but I remember discussions that occurred that could impact us. We had some resistance to some of the states when we got involved in some of those social issues, whether it was gay rights, any human civil right for that matter.

VS: Maybe going more directly towards work that you might have been more directly involved with, I know that from my reading, when school systems first started really

integrating in the mid sixties that NEA set up a fund specifically for teachers who had unjustly lost their jobs. So just to recap, I don't know how familiar you are with this.

RN: I actually worked in that area. Legal services split off and that was one of the areas. It was called the DuShane Fund.

VS: Yeah, so teachers would, you'd have a school district that used to be a white school district and a black school district, and they would integrate the school district and the white teachers would end up getting the jobs and the black teachers would, you know. At least from my reading, that was how the pattern was falling a lot, let's say. So this fund, I think it was the DuShane Fund, served its purpose. There may have been other funds. It helped those teachers who had been kind of unfairly let go when the school systems integrated, helped cover their legal costs so they could say, hey, this was discrimination. I should have been given an equal chance to get my job as well.

Now, I know that that was happening in the sixties. And I know that by the early eighties, the NEA was continuing to run investigations in school districts that were accused of not integrating properly, let's say. Do you know if your work with legal services, providing funds for civil suits or anything like that, was there ever any case where something along those lines, where a teacher may be suffering discrimination, something like that within a school district where that was used?

RN: I don't recall, and the reason would be we were more of a funding mechanism. There's two pieces to that. What we did is we provided funds directly to the state association, and they would hire their attorneys to deal. Then they would determine which cases to handle. Actually, there's two pieces to that. There was that piece, and there was a bigger piece where NEA would sometimes get directly involved with a significant case. That was money that was handled through our general counsel's office. They worked with the director of our department, **Lynn Olman**, and she worked with **Bob Shannon**, who was the general counsel. They would decide which of those bigger cases they would take on.

But in terms of what we did, we would make sure that the states were using the money in accordance with our program. So I was assigned – I don't know how many states I had, but it was kind of an auditing function, in a way. Every two years I'd visit each state and we'd actually go through the cases. But it wouldn't be for the purpose of necessarily deciding which ones were per se meritorious, although maybe in some sense, but it was mostly to make sure that the money we gave them was actually being used in the way that they said.

I think at the time, I have to say there were very few of those kinds of cases at that point. I had some southern states in my region. It mostly was just typical teacher dismissals. There was some in Louisiana, I guess, there were some that may have been racial issues. But most of them were regular teacher dismissals for whatever.

VS: That's the questions I had related to legal services and teacher rights, I guess. Something may come up and I may return to that if a thought or question comes to me that I hadn't written down so far. So just a quick clarification, that's where you went after you left legal services was special services?

RN: Correct.

VS: That was in between, before you went to running the conferences?

RN: That was '85, that's right.

VS: So was special service. That was you would provide the insurance for essentially people could like – it was financial packages, insurance, retirement packages, things like that for members. Is that correct?

RN: It was interesting. Special services was created I think in the mid seventies, and it was the part of the organization for member benefits, something called member benefits now, as you may know, in Rockville. So there was a group up in Rockville, it was called Teacher Services Corporation, TSC. Now it's called Member Benefits, I believe. We were the downtown arm of that division. So that special services, again, was not as involved with NEA day-to-day activity. It was more involved providing benefits, but also that department had the conference component to it. So we had a director, Alreigh

Greenblatt, who was quite a character by the way. He had created special services and I guess he actually wanted to take over the convention, so he did. So when I was special services, we did both those pieces.

VS: So you did have some work early on with the conventions. Can you talk just a little bit about the process involved in arranging a representative assembly? What's the sort of basic steps?

RN: Well, I always tell everybody we were always working on three conventions at any given time. First of all, I guess, well, backing up, you have to find sites and there's only about a dozen cities in the country that could host the annual meeting. By the way, you'll hear people say annual meeting, representative assembly, RA, but the annual meeting. Because of the unusual nature of logistics, some places, it was very similar to a democratic Republican convention so you had to have a very large conference room. Then you had to have probably anywhere from, when I first came on, maybe 8,000 to 10,000 delegates in that range, plus other guests, so there was probably 15,000 people who would attend our convention.

So you needed a lot of buses, a lot of hotels. So again, we're limited to only a few places in the country. We always hold our convention over the July 4th holiday, generally never starting earlier than the 30th of June and never ending later than the 8th of July, but a little wiggle room on both sides of that. So we had an RFP we developed and we'd send

it out, and had all these items in there that we thought were important. Cities would fill them out, fill out the RFP. Once we got it back, we'd again look at the hotel package, look at the convention center, whether it would work or not. Then after you have the give and take, you do a site visit and look at what the city had to offer. I think NEA claimed when I was leaving that we brought about \$35 million into the economy of a city, which is a fair amount, and it's in part because we had all of the delegates.

We had a lot of bussing, an incredible amount of bussing. I think over 100 busses for our convention, because it's a mass move of people at any one time. Most conferences you have people just kind of go to a session at 10:00 or 12:00. NEA had pre convention meetings and they had the giant conference and everyone came at the same time. So yeah, we'd work with the convention bureaus. They would provide a person or persons to work with us. Then we'd actually have staff that would visit all the hotels.

The most interesting part of the process I think not to me but a lot of people is the way we chose the hotels. It was kind of like – I don't know if you follow sports, but depending on your last two years, if you were – we rated hotels in terms of quality, one through five, and then distance one through five. So if you had low numbers, you picked higher. High numbers, you picked lower. So each state is housed individually in a hotel, we work with the states, and they have their coordinators that go with them to do these site visits as well, and then they'd choose their hotels. Then once we were on site, it was always interesting because, whereas when you have challenges that occur when you're in the

building, generally you have time to fix them, but because you're at a convention with 9,000 of your dearest friends and there was some unusual challenges, you had to respond very quickly or else it could be a political issue.

So there are lots of little components I can get into more if you want to, of things that occurred that were kind of interesting over time. Sometimes there would be rumors that somebody – there was some racist issue occurring somewhere and we had to deal with that.

VS: So do you mean among the members, or a member encountering something?

RN: Well, I'll give you a good example. In 1987, '86 I guess, we were in Louisville, and some members were having dinner at a restaurant kind of outside Louisville. It was a smaller restaurant, I'd say mom a pop independent. As I recall, I think they were – I don't know if they were African American or Latino. Anyway, they weren't given a table right away, and then once they sat down, they felt they weren't being attended to. So they got angry and they came back and they complained to – I forget which state they were from, they complained to their officers in their state and their officers in their state complained to hierarchy at NEA.

Next thing you know, on the floor of the representative assembly, there was going to be on the floor of the representative assembly, a vote to boycott this particular place. So

anyway, people wanted the NEA to put its resources behind going to the Chamber of Commerce and possibly having a picket line. It kind of spun out of control. So here we were, they called me, and we talked to the owner of the restaurant. This guy was just a salt of the earth guy. I'm not going to say he didn't have issues, but it certainly wasn't apparent to me. He said, look, I have I don't know how many employees. Out of my fifteen employees I have five that were African American he called it, some black employees. He says it wouldn't even cross my mind. So anyway, we stopped that, so, out of that.

And in the early nineties, I don't know if you recall because you're probably too young, but Nelson Mandela was released from prison I think it was '89 or '90, I don't remember the sequence, but we had made arrangements to have our convention in Miami Beach in '91. In mid '90, the mayor of Miami had said something disparaging I believe about Nelson Mandela, so our delegates wanted us to boycott. Now, the challenge with a boycott from our point of view is, when this happens there's a lot of liability because we have these contracts in place. You know, we'd book a place anywhere from six to ten years out, but we start signing contracts two or three years out. Pretty much after three years you're sucked in, once you make the hotel reservations and everything so we were pretty much sucked in.

So, a lot of our black members wanted us to boycott this convention so they created a committee. I think it was chaired by the secretary treasurer. We went down to Miami

and did an investigation, and worked with the community and ended up having our convention there so long as the community did some kind of overtures. But out of that effort, they created something called the Committee for Equity and Ethnic Harmony. So every convention after that, and they may still have it, they had it when I was last there, they have a group that is appointed by the president. I think it's like seven people, maybe more, officers, and their job is to deal with these kinds of rumors. So whenever there is an incident that occurs, instead of it being sent to us as staff to deal with, it was easier for us to have a governance committee to deal with some of those issues.

So I have to say in the last couple of years, it seemed crazy to be part of our department. I arranged to have that be under the purview of human and civil rights, probably in about 2005 or 2006. But anyway, yeah, so they existed, and when there were rumors it went through them. And it was easier for us to deal with those kinds of political issues, because lots of times rumors at a convention and something like that, they just fly out of nowhere and they have a life of their own.

VS: So do you feel like the creation of that committee, did it seem like things were smoother after that?

RN: Yes. In some ways it was worse, because sometimes you had people, some people that are, even though I'm pretty progressive, some people are more bleeding hearts than I am, so that element of the organization always wants to solve the member's problem. Most

times it's a perception issue. I walk into a room, someone ignores me, and it's usually like that. It's a consumer issue. I went to a store and the clerk didn't wait on me very quickly, I think because I'm whatever I am. I am Hispanic, by the way, so I understand that I have lots of my colleagues and friends who have dealt with issues like this in their own lives. I fortunately have not as much. So, the committee being there, it's easier for us when the committee told the person, you know, this seems like it's an issue that may not be discrimination. It may be a person who worked there wasn't very thoughtful. Whereas if a staff guy said it, it didn't have as much sway.

But sometimes the NEA would resolve some of these issues. They'd ask us to boycott that particular place, or we'd send something out to the state associations at the convention saying we've been told that Joe Blow's Diner has created—, so we encourage you to avoid Joe Blow's Diner, that kind of thing.

VS: So when you were sending out these RFPs for cities to vie to host the convention for the annual meeting, and you're talking about all this money coming in, did you ever encounter a situation where because of a political situation a city decided they didn't want to host the NEA? Did you have sort of the opposite situation where there were problems on the other end of them not wanting to host you guys?

RN: No. I can't think if that ever happened. We always would say pretty much up front that we would meet with them. They know we're a progressive organization. We often march. In '85 we had a big march on the South African embassy here.

VS: I've seen pictures of it.

RN: Yeah, that was my first year of managing the convention. So we marched. We'd always let the cities know, we could march, but no one ever did that. It would be the opposite way. For a while, because of the Equal Rights Amendment, we weren't allowed to go to cities that had not ratified the ERA, and for a long time, we had only a small number of cities anyway, so it left out a lot of the southern states. So NEA sometimes got in its own way.

It's easier when you're negotiating for this kind of convention to have a competitive bid. So if we had more cities, it made it easier to cut a better deal with a city. But no, I don't recall that ever being a problem with a city. First of all, all the cities we went to were major metropolitan areas. Even in conservative places, like let's say Texas, the cities are generally moderate liberal or even liberal. So all the cities, Atlanta, Dallas, I never had problems at any of those places. We were the problem.

The other problem that we ran into that was kind of interesting, for a long time we had a Marriot boycott. That took up a lot of energy for the organization. It's an interesting

one, I guess, because Marriot way back when used to have a lot of – well, NEA as you know, represents paraprofessionals and we have a lot of food service operations. Starting in the nineties, maybe, Marriot started contracting out to Marriot. Marriot has different – they had a hotel division, they had three different parts of the organization. One of them was the school services piece.

So because they were contracting out to Marriot, a lot of our members wanted us to boycott Marriot. So for many years, we couldn't use Marriotts. We spent a lot of time trying to get past that boycott. I mean, I literally flew around the country meeting with Marriot representatives trying to say, can you do something with this? They would say, look, we don't have anything to do with that part of the organization. Anyway, I think the boycott finally ended in the late nineties. But yeah, that made it difficult, because again, if you only have a certain number of cities and you have a couple of big Marriot hotels and you can't use them, that's a problem.

VS: Yeah, I imagine. Especially when you've got to find rooms for you said something like 9,000 people and you can't use one of the largest hotels in the city.

RN: Yeah, it was crazy. Finally Marriot sold that piece off. I think something called Sodexo, and that's another story. Sodexo managed NEA's food service, so we had to get rid of them in the building. But anyway, some of those boycotts made life interesting. One time we had a problem with a hotel. I can remember one of my last years we had a

problem with a hotel called the Manchester Hyatt in San Diego, because I think the guy's name was Manchester, he had given money to the same sex marriage campaign in California. So we had already booked the city, and we had to finesse our ability for the California delegation to stay in that hotel. That's kind of a long story. I won't get into it unless you want me to.

But yeah, those kinds of things made life interesting. I remember very well in San Francisco in '93, there was a Park 55 – Park 55? Something, the hotel, they were having labor problems, and so Local 2, I got to know a lot of the locals throughout the country, was boycotting several hotels. So again, we booked the city, and after that there was some labor problem so we had to see if we could finesse that. So we almost had to pull out of the hotel at the last minute. A few things happened in LA in 2005. There was a city-wide boycott going in 2005 in Los Angeles, and so we negotiated with the mayor's office and the Hotel Employee and Restaurant Employees Union were on our side to allow us to use the hotels in LA that we wanted to use.

So again, those are longer stories, and those had major impacts on the conventions because once you're in a hotel and you pull out of that hotel, there are some – (*telephone interruption*) you want to stop that and I'll just answer this real quickly?

[End of Nuanes1]

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VS: And we're recording again.

RN: So, when you have, when you book hotels, it's very close to the commission in L.A.

They want us to pull out within like a couple of months of the convention. I mean, first of all, we didn't have anywhere to put people in some cases. We'd have bus them to places or we'd have to have them in hotels that were just really of inferior quality. So fortunately it was literally within – actually one person, one state hadn't got a hotel and there was some pretty heavy penalties, but it was only within – less than maybe a month before the convention, they finally had a settlement. So, yeah, that was the biggest challenges with that convention.

The convention, itself, I loved it. There was a lot of pieces to it, but, it was relatively easy from where I sat, other than the police piece. The political piece was the one part that was uncontrollable. I used to always tell my colleagues, my staff colleagues, that it's not the things – the things you worry about are things you just don't know are going to happen. It's the things you can't control, and that's usually where we were pretty good about avoiding those problems. But yeah, I was – I'm doing stream of caution stuff here. I don't know if you want me to stop.

VS: That's totally fine; go ahead.

RN: But in nineteen – and I don't remember the year right now, but if I thought about it, I probably could – we had exhibits, and so we used to have to make sure that exhibitors did not sell products or have a philosophy that was different than NEA Philosophy. And as you may know, for a long time, the Boy Scouts refused to admit gay youth or have gay scout leaders. So for many years, the Boy Scouts exhibited at our convention, and the NEA convention has all these caucuses, these sub-caucuses that meet, called special interest caucuses. Some are related to the education issues, but a lot of them are social related issues, or it can be a black caucus, Hispanic caucus, gay and lesbian caucus, and a speech and freedom caucus.

Anyway, the gay and lesbian caucus was threatening to shut down the booth, the Boy Scout booth. They were going to go in, they were going to link arms and shut the booth down. It was, like, the last day of the exhibits and I was told by my powers at be that I was supposed to – I had to tell the Boy Scout guy to shut his booth down. So I did; went down early in the morning, and said, "I know you've been here a couple days, and I'm sorry, you have to leave." Typically, we'd stop that stuff in the front end. There's always issues around abortion. We had a pro-life caucus; they were members. And then, I don't think we had a choice caucus, because the organization is very strongly pro-choice, but we'd often have problems with the pro-life caucus. They were allowed to have a booth because they were members. An outside group could not be advocating pro-life, but our members could. So they were allowed to have a booth, but we had to monitor the contents of the booth. Sometimes, they'd have photos of things that were of fetuses, things that might be objectionable, and so we'd have to make sure they weren't

displaying those kind of things. So, it was the political piece that was always kind of interesting. It wasn't generally the logistical piece. The logistical piece seem to run pretty darn well, I have to say. We did a pretty good job.

VS: If you don't mind going into a little more detail with some of these things, these are actually very interesting stories, I think, especially the way that NEA, maybe, handled them, dealt with them, the way you, you individually, maybe, handled them, or dealt with them. Just to go back a couple of minutes here, you'd mentioned the hotel in San Diego, where you said the person had given money to a same-sex marriage organization?

RN: There was a same-sex initiative in California, I think it was to repeal the California law, and he'd given money to that particular –

VS: To repeal it?

RN: Yes, yes.

VS: Okay, just wanted to clarify on that situation. Yeah, these stories are very interesting. It sounded like there's a lot of them. Do you feel like every year you'd be setting up the RA, and there'd be a sort of a new thing coming up, something where you felt like you had to sort of personally intervene, to try to handle the situation? Was it very common?

RN: Well, generally, you'd have a good sense, as you got to the convention, what kind of things might be hot issues. There was a period there where our delegates wanted to march. For example, in '89, when we were here, that was the year that there'd been the Tiananmen Square, I don't know if you remember?

VS: Yeah.

RN: In China, there'd been a protest, and people were killed, and so our delegates voted to have a rally. The convention was in D.C., and they voted to have a rally on the mall. We typically would be against rallies for two reasons. One, anytime you had a rally, they would pull delegates out of the representative assembly for probably half a day, and our governance would never say this, but they didn't want these rallies. They'd have a schedule for the representative assembly; they'd want to go through the schedule. When you have a rally, not only do you pull people out, it's a lot of money. We spent thousands of dollars. If you wanted to bus 9,000 people to a site, you have to get a stage, you have to get permits, but the NEA didn't ever do rallies in a halfhearted way. You had make sure you have portable bathrooms, you had to have water; you know, it was summer. We actually arranged to have a big rally on the mall that day, and people used to joke the NEA gods were with us, because we had a torrential rainstorm, so we canceled that rally.

But yeah, it was always something that goes on, and oftentimes, it might have been a presidential visit. We had Clinton visited; he was running in 92', and he visited the NEA

convention in '93, and then I know that whenever it was election year, we would almost always have a Democratic nominee visit the convention. Those were always interesting because they set up the magnetometers and the airport security devices, and all of our delegates had to go through those, so it was like two, three hours, just for people to get through those. As much as you tell the delegates just bring what you need, don't bring stuff, and so we got better at that as time went on. Yeah, there were things like that, that when you knew them, it was easier. Like if you knew you were having a presidential visit, you could prepare for those kinds of things. If something popped up, or something like the hotel restaurant issues, those were problematical when they occurred within a year of the convention. And we had a few of those. Those were always the toughest ones, actually, because what we would do is there would be some members that would say we need to start thinking about pulling out because there's a strike, because the NEA won't cross a picket line. Funny thing though, the unions never would honor our issues.

VS: Oh, really?

RN: Yeah, we would bend over backwards to help the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union. In fact, I knew well the president here at Local 25, John Boardman. We allowed them to use our building for when they were on strike, and John was great in terms of saying we'll help you, but they never really did. So, whatever this issue with that union, a lot of are members would say we're not going to cross that picket line. And they knew that; the unions knew that, so even if there was not a strike, they would tell us

we are going to have to put up a picket line because we don't want you using that particular hotel. They would just do it because they knew NEA would cave.

And I don't know why I took these things so personally because I use to tell people, well it's not my money, why do I care. I think it's because you just want everything to go smoothly. And you don't want to use – I was always known as a cheapskate. I didn't want to waste resources. And when you know the real story, we know sometimes that the union was using you – and I was certainly a supporter of here. John Boardman would probably tell you, I was one of the best guys out there. But when you knew that they were using you to get what they wanted, and they wouldn't give you something back when you needed it, then it was a problem.

VS: Yeah, I can imagine.

RN: It put the governments in a bind, and certainly our president had to be involved with most of these issues, and the officers. But they were good about being very supportive whatever decisions we had to make.

VS: I do want to go a little bit into some of the celebrity politicians visiting RA's or stuff like that. But to step back a quick second, so you mentioned how they always want to march, they always want to hold a rally during this certain period of time. Was there ever a situation where there was a march or rally, where things went out of hand and you ended up having a couple of arrests or something like that? Did that situation ever occur?

RN: Yes, although it was intended, it was the march here in '85 at the South African Embassy. They designated two people from each state, to be arrested. I forget what was happening; people have been protesting at the Embassy, which is just up the road here, by the way, just up off Mass Avenue. Go up there and turn left, your there. We had arranged with every state to have two people get arrested. I think half the delegates marched, half of them stayed in the RA and watched on the big screen. What were successful doing, really, is having limited marches. We marched in New Orleans in '88; I don't remember why, but it was a smaller group that did it, and I don't think anyone got arrested there. We had people get arrested at our conventions for various things, but usually not related to the march.

I always tell this story, because it's indicative of New Orleans. I love New Orleans, but it's kind of the strangest city in the country because they march to a different drummer down there. We had a – and I'm sorry to do stream of consciousness here – but we had an exhibit, and there was a woman who had an exhibit and she had a little – something was not right with her, and she was running around stealing things from other exhibitors. So, we have a company we hire to run our exhibits, and this guy Larry said, "I've got this woman, she's causing a problem." And so, security would talk to her, and she kept on doing it. Finally, they said if you're going to keep on doing this, we're going to have to arrest you. Larry didn't know this, but apparently we sub-contract for a security company, and they arrested her. As we joke, somebody's grandmother got arrested, so what are we going to do.

So I went to the president of the convention bureau, a guy named Ed McNeil who – pretty powerful. So I said, “We have this women who got arrested and we want to – is there anything we can do?” I just called Ed and he said come with me. We literally walked to the chambers where the city council was meeting, and he said, “Wait here.” He went up to the table where the council people were meeting, pulled one guy out, talked to him, came back to me and said, “Your woman is going to be let out of jail. They’re going to arraign her, just tell her to get out of town,” and she was gone. That was, to me, indicative of New Orleans justice. They could just pull the strings in places like that. Most places you couldn’t do that.

We had another situation were someone got arrested. A staff person actually got arrested because she was in a bar, having a drink, and some guy was harassing her. I don’t know the full circumstances, but she apparently threatened him. Or I don’t know if she actually hit him with a bottle she broke, or something, so she was arrested. We had other people got arrested.

We always had a demonstration. Almost every year, an outside organization would demonstrate at our conventions. They were a pro-life organization, and they would demonstrate, so we knew they were coming, so we would always tell the powers that be in the city, we tell our delegates to ignore them. But there was one year, something happened because Miami Beach, I don’t know remember what happened, but someone got arrested for – they got into it with an outside organization.

But generally, for the big marches, we were lucky. We got the permits and we worked really hard to tell our delegates how to act. And these teachers, they were – the organization is probably three-quarters women, and our organization is a little older. I don't think these people wanted to be arrested, for the most part. Sometimes, I'm sure things could have gotten out of hand. We had an element of our organization we always called the Oakland Group. They were very progressive, and they typically wanted to – they weren't anarchists, but they were pretty far left, and they didn't mind having the confrontations. So, as long as we kept those guys in check, we were ok, usually.

VS: Were they called the Oakland group because they were mostly from Oakland?

RN: They were a subset of the California's Teachers Association, and they were a very liberal part of the organization. I think they were all from Oakland. If they weren't, that's how we described them. They may have been from other parts of the state, as well.

VS: So, moving on to some of the celebrity speakers. When I say celebrity, I mean, kind of broadly politicians, cultural commentators, authors, actors, singers. I noticed that the RAs would often have these individuals coming to visit. I'm sure a lot of certainly politicians, like Johnathan Kozol, if I'm saying his name correctly. Occasionally, I've seen, it might have been a little farther back in time before the eighties were you would see like comedians and actors and singers would often host, as well. I have a couple pictures of Danny Kaye, I think.

RN: Oh my god, that's before my time. I don't remember that.

VS: So regularly, you would have celebrities. So how exactly would they get invited? Like, what was the process of getting a high profile speaker to come to the RA?

RN: That wasn't done by our office. I don't know if one of the people you interview is Irma Kramer – I forget what her office is called; it's not important. But they were the top staff aids of the president, and they would reach out to those individuals. We would only get involved in the logistical piece sometimes. But typically they would, and I'm not sure who, where, how. Sometimes someone would know somebody, or they would use their contacts and reach out to those individuals.

But we also had a lot of people like you mention Johnathan Kozol. NEA has the, I think you referenced it earlier, but they have a Friend of Education Award that they gave annually to someone who had been instrumental in helping education. Sometimes they were – I don't know if we had many – Johnathan Kozol was one of the winners, Ted Kennedy once, and certainly other politicians. But the politicians, I'm sure are easier because our government relations staff would deal with – they know somebody at those levels. I'm not quite sure how it would happen with the other people. I know one year we had one of the Beach Boys come, and he spoke – didn't sing. He spoke. Actually, I really can't say how we got those people. Sometimes they would show up and we would pick them up. There was somebody – I can't remember this. It's a good story I can't tell,

because I can't remember. There was somebody, maybe it was one of the Beach Boys, who they would have a staff person meet that person. Usually they call it – the eighth floor was the top floor of NEA. We always called – the eighth floor meant the governance and the executive office. The eighth floor would probably designate someone to meet these people, and then they would bring them to their hotel. They would stay with them.

But someone went with their car and, it may have been one of the Beach Boys, who said I'm not going to get in that car. The car wasn't good enough for him. I'm not quite sure what happened, but yeah. Most people they picked that NEA dealt with were very nice. I know some were a challenge, like I mentioned Jesse Jackson. I don't remember exactly the circumstances, but sometimes people like Jesse Jackson – watch my words carefully, I don't want to be accused of defamation. But typically, some people would come to our events because we were progressive and we were in line with their thinking. And also, it would help them. And Jesse Jackson I think certainly had ambitions, and then NEA would often fund causes that were near and dear to some of the people that came to our events. I think that people like Jesse Jackson, and others, would view NEA as an opportunity to get some kind of support from NEA. Some were more aggressive than others in terms of wanting that sort of support. I think he may have been one of them. But at the time, he was a draw. I think he may have come in future years, and it was like, oh Jesse Jackson, yeah, I think he's down in room 311. No one seemed to care, but he spoke to the representative assembly, I know at least once.

VS: Just talking about a specific political figure coming to talk, in 1994, Hillary Clinton came to speak and one of the things I know, just timeline wise, her health care plan that we all remember as Hillarycare, was kind of officially still considered possible at that time. I think it was a month later in August or something that it became fairly clear that there was no way it was going to pass. And at the same time, some of the scandals that we remember from the Clinton years, like for instance, the specific one in this case was the Whitewater scandal had just hit, I think maybe two months or something before the RA. So obviously, she was already scheduled to come, and all the arrangements were made and everything. Do you just remember any of the tension between her as a polarizing figure? Was there any difficulty with the association around that?

RN: That was in New Orleans and I – nothing. And I was pretty politically attuned. I don't recall anything like that. I think everyone was pretty excited about her being there. I think probably NEA's heyday, politically, was during the Clinton administration. Ron Brown, he was Secretary Of Commerce, and I don't remember what his role was during the campaign. But he came to the NEA building after the '92 election and he said that he viewed NEA as the most important organization in terms of getting Bill Clinton elected. I think Clinton felt NEA was really instrumental, and during those eight years, our board of directors was frequently invited to go to the White House. Probably at least once a year, they'd go to the White House. That didn't happen during the Obama administration, I'm pretty sure, if it happened at all I don't know. It didn't happen while I was there.

My point is that I think that there was a love fest between NEA and the Clintons at that point. There was a little tension when the Monica Lewinski issue happened. Being a primarily female organization, a lot of members, a lot of our people were starting to take a step back and say, whoa. During that time, I think that we were star struck. I mean, we first endorsed in '76, and you had the Regan-Bush years, the 12 years of Regan-Bush. So by the time the Clinton's came, I think they were starved for attention. He came in '92 in D.C., when he was running; he came in '93. He was on his way to a conference in Japan, and it worked out well. He came and spoke at our convention, and it was the first time – I don't remember if Carter ever spoke at our convention, because I wasn't as involved in the conventions during those years. But, yeah, first time we had a president speak, at least at the convention that I was at. That was '93.

VS: Following that then, I know that when Hillary spoke in '94 – at least it appears so; I couldn't find the actual text of her speech, but I found a reference to it – was that she asked that the NEA endorse her healthcare plan. Looking at the resolutions for that year that were passed at the 1994 RA, there's one to support healthcare for children, but nothing about universal healthcare. And there were other ones like supporting migrant workers, so things that were not necessarily targeted only at children, only at students, or only at teachers. Do you know, could you remember why NEA, at that time, didn't decide to endorse her healthcare plan?

RN: I have no memory. In fact, if you had put a gun to my head, I thought the whole healthcare issue actually occurred in '93.

VS: Oh, really?

RN: But, for some reason, I thought it was during the early years of the administration, but if '94 is what you're talking about, it must have been '94. But I don't remember her talking about that.

VS: This is my research that I did, and I found, I think, it was an RA today, one of the kind of convention-related publications, where there was mention of the fact that she talked about wanting an endorsement –

RN: I'm sure your right.

VS: – from the NEA itself.

RN: I don't recall any discussion. I remember some of the logistics involved with all those visits, but I don't recall anything. In fact, I think there's a picture of me shaking her hand during that '94 visit.

VS: Just a couple of other things that I noticed in some later RA's. We're sort of getting towards the end of my questions, here. In 1997, I noticed there was a program, for – this this was in Atlanta – there was a program to donate \$15,000 to a local homeless shelter.

And it made it seem, the way it was written, like a charitable act was like a part of every RA, where there would be a local donation. Is that true?

RN: Yes. I forgot about that. I forgot when it started, but we had – again, the genesis may have been one of our Peace and Freedom Caucus; I don't really recall. But there was a lot of members that felt when we go into a city, we should do some activity. And there was a stretch of about ten years where we had an activity and it might be – and the way our convention was structured, the annual meeting starts, let's say it started on – it's a six-day event. But before the six-day event there were pre-convention meetings. During that pre-convention period, most delegates were already there, attending other activities, and so we would – this is kind of funny because we spent a lot of money. We'd find members that wanted to go to wherever it was, the food bank or Habitat for Humanity. They would volunteer to those activities, so we would actually transport them to those activities, and then we'd make a donation.

It seemed like that stopped in later years, but there was a period of time when we would do that. What may have happened, there was a couple of women that were really behind this. I think they took it over towards the end, and we would support them. But yeah, to answer your question, there was a period of time that may still be going on, where would do some kind of activity, some giving back within the community. It was either a food bank or the Habitat for Humanity, those kinds of activities. Sometimes it might be a Read Across America activity, some kind of reading activity. We'd bring kids down to

the convention center and we would read to them. It would be like a little media event. There's always things like that.

I think the feeling, too, quite honestly is that you wanted to create an environment that we were not only giving back, but we wanted to do something that would show the community, or anybody else, that we were doing something for them. There was always media events, and I know that our communications department would be involved in trying to do some of these things. We spent a fair amount of activity in some of those things. I remember creating this whole like little playhouse, and we would have all these – I remember all these balloons, lots of balloons, and it was just for the officer's to read to these kids. They had a bunch of volunteer members to read to the kids during the course of the day.

VS: So it sounds like there was an attempt to make it non-partisan?

RN: Yep.

VS: It was something like a homeless shelter or reading to kids, something that is across the political spectrum.

RN: Sometimes both would occur, but the food bank thing seemed like it went on for a long time. I remember my colleague, **Toni Williams**, I remembered she (indiscernible 00:27:57). She worked with the food bank, and she would organize the day we could

come in. And it was kind of crazy, because they would come in, and it was almost like they'd come in for two hours and they were gone. It was one those things like a media event. Most people were committed, but some just wanted to just spend their two hours doing the activity.

VS: So, my last question and, this is, again, maybe something that if you were involved more with the logistics of the meeting you may not have remembered. But in 1998, there was a talk of merger between the AFT and the NEA. I know that the merger was to be discussed at the RA. Do have any memories of, like, why did it not follow through? Was the AFT actually at the RA for that, or was it internal only?

RN: No, I remember lots about that year. I forget when all the discussions started, but NEA, because it's so democratic, the AFT was ready to merge. I forget how their structure works, but they were going to vote to merge. NEA, I believe, needed two-thirds vote if we were going to merge. And I would say for a year – you know, our president was guy named Bob Chase, and our executive director was a guy named Don Cameron, and there was a lot of talk about it well before the convention, and a lot of lobbying that went on before the convention. And there was some very strong – the most political vocal states during my time were California and New Jersey. New Jersey was very anti-AFT. The AFT was very strong in New York City, and I think that there'd been some bad blood because, Jersey being so close to New York, they were very anti-AFT.

Lots of discussions, but I can say that we were, as staff even, we were – we met with AFT people. I remember one of my colleagues saying that woman, it looks like Sally, I forget her name, I think, Richard, it looked like she was ready to move into your office. I can tell you most of the staff – I can say this, I wouldn't have said it then, but most of the staff were against the merger, but we supported it. In fact, I always felt good about this – I'll get to your question a little bit later. After the merger vote lost, I remember one of my colleagues coming up to me, very close, one of my managers, said, "I'm really sorry Rich; I know your disappointed." And I thought to myself, I'm happy as a pig in you-know-what.

But, you know, my job was to support the organization, so we did. We supported them, but personally, I was against it. Yeah, the vote, not only did we not get two-thirds, they didn't even get majority. And I could see then, and I remember that when Bob Chase looked like – Bob Chase as the president – he looked really depressed. He was ashen.

VS: He was expecting a different outcome?

RN: Well, yeah, it was a crushing defeat. If you had to get two-thirds and you didn't even get a majority, it was a crushing defeat. I think that – and others can speak to this better than I can – there was a very strong lobbying going on by the governance, but it didn't sell to the members. They didn't see what was in it for them. First of all, it's probably like Nixon going to China. We were raised to be anti-AF. We call them the feds. When I came to NEA, we were always working against them. There was lots of times when they

would be challenging some of our locals, trying to take over some those locals. There were several places in the country that were joint, like California, New Orleans they're joint NEA, AFT. But for a long time, they were considered Baltimore. They were bad guys. Then it all changed.

I think it was smart. I mean, the reality is that we were spending all kinds of time organizing against them, as opposed to using our resources for things that are important to the organization. So the idea of at least working together made all the sense in the world. Most people were not against that. I think the problem people had was they weren't sure that that made the most sense to the members. Now, there were several states that already merged. I think at the time, there may have been five. Minnesota was the first one, and then, like, New Mexico, and I forget which other ones had merged. There were several states that had already had the merger and still are merged, as I understand. I think New York is one of them now.

But yeah, it was a lot of conversation, and NEA has secret ballot, so I don't think anyone had a sense of how it was going to go. We were pretty sure New Jersey was going to come out strongly against it, and there was probably a sense of California. But I think the AFT was primarily a urban organization, and we were more primarily a suburban, rural organization. I've got to believe that some people – when I came, (indiscernible 00:33:36) knew I left. A lot of people would never think of NEA as being a union. Some people, probably from rural upstate New York – that's not a good place, but maybe if

you're down south, you're rural Alabama, you probably think of yourself as being a professional association as opposed to the Union.

VS: Yeah.

RN: And so AFT was a union. I mean, they were the union. Al Shanker had really made them a different organization, a very effective leader and made them into a different kind of organization. NEA came along in its own way. There were a lot of members in some of those states, Arkansas, Alabama, that didn't think of themselves as being part of a union. So we didn't know how states voted, because it was secret ballot. But if I had to guess, I'd say that probably the rust belt was probably more likely to vote for it, and then down south was most likely to vote against it. But yeah, it was a crushing defeat.

VS: Just a logistical question. So in the vote that's against it, is it something where each state gets a vote, or is it the members as a whole?

RN: The members. I don't know how many delegates voted, but it was probably 8,000 plus delegates.

VS: California, for instance, it was essentially a popular vote win? Like California votes would effectively get more votes than, say, Alabama?

RN: Yeah, it's like the Democratic or Republic Convention.

VS: Okay.

RN: It's allocated based upon members.

VS: Oh, okay.

RN: For all I know, people in New Jersey, I mean, I couldn't tell you how California voted. All we knew is how leadership felt in those states. New Jersey, I've got to believe you're a member in New Jersey, you probably, voted against it, and most people in California, too. But we wouldn't know, because it was a secret ballot. We set up this voting system, and all we got was the results; we got a number. We as staff – I didn't think it was going to pass. I wasn't sure, but boy, I didn't think it was going to be below 50 percent. That was a shock. Everyone was shocked.

I don't know where they are with the merger today, but I think they've decided to just collaborate after that. That was '98, and we have collaborated with them ever since then while I was there. It was good, because I forget the amount of dollars we spent on organizing battles, and they don't do that anymore. We agree on almost every issue. Sometimes we appear jointly with them. In fact, someone told me, or NEA's president Lily Eskelsen Garcia, got married about two years ago, and the president of the AFT was at the wedding. So we're very close now with the AFT. It's a very good relationship. I think people felt that it's one thing to be close; it's another thing for us to be merged.

Maybe if we started over again, merging would make sense, but the culture of the organization was very different. In fact, it was interesting; when we talked merger, the secretary treasurer of the AFT came over to NEA. We all met, all-staff meeting – this was way before – talking about what they're like and how the staff would be able to collaborate. I'm sure it would have worked; we would have collaborated. It's just that, for a lot of us, we knew that our view was they were a top-down organization, and NEA is more of a bottom-up organization. The joke was, even Don Cameron the executive director, use to always say that the AFT was like a small boat and, I mean, and NEA was like a big battleship; it took us a while to turn. They would make decisions. They had a 30 person board or committee that made decisions very easily, whereas NEA had an eleven member executive committee and a hundred-and-some-50-member board of directors, and making decisions at NEA could take forever, sometimes. So, just very different organizations, but that was a very interesting year.

VS: It's interesting that you say AFT was – that they were on the pro joining side, I guess, because one of the things that I thought maybe was a sticking point was – so Bob Chase, at that time, had started promoting New Unionism, his version of the NEA's direction. Which, at least from an outsider perspective, is maybe a little bit more towards the professional association side, a little yes towards the union side, by trying to come up with, if my understanding of it is correct, methods for holding teachers accountable, things like that, kind of maybe playing in line with school performance stuff –

RN: Yeah.

VS: And I would have assumed that would have been a sticking point for the AFT, but it sounds like AFT was on board, totally.

RN: Well it's interesting; Bob Chase's New Unionism was a pretty radical departure for us. I'm trying to remember when he got elected. Maybe it was right around that time. Maybe it was '98, even. I could figure it out if I had to. But anyway, when he gave a speech at the National Press Club, it was a big deal. I think that Don Cameron was the driver in getting NEA to change. It was a much different way. They decided instead of being a more – this is more my word now not their word – be a more strident union, they wanted to have elements of the union and elements of a professional organization. So yeah, that was a pretty dramatic.

But it's interesting, I think the AFT, sometimes they would take positions that were more in the mainstream of reform, perceived as more in the mainstream of reform than NEA. I'm not sure if the actual application was that way, but on some of the issues, they probably saw more eye to eye than you might think. They were just known, because they were in cities, for being more likely to be a union, tough guys, whereas NEA was probably more of the tea and crumpets organization, at least in the earlier days. We came to the party a little later. Chase's tenor was very interesting at the time. I think he was a good president, tried to move the NEA in a different direction, and probably, from the big picture point of view, having us merge certainly was the right thing to do. Because I was

personally against it doesn't mean it was the right thing, to be against. I just felt it culturally was a problem.

VS: Well that's my questions. I don't know if you have any last random thoughts that you wanted to share.

RN: No, you got me to ramble, and my wife says I'm a yacker, so I probably yacked more than you wanted.

VS: No, this was great, actually. This was perfect. I feel like whatever you may have worried about not having interesting stories, I feel like all these stories about running the conventions are, I think, are fascinating, and would be an interesting insight into the culture of the NEA at the time, and kind of maybe the difficulty of sort of navigating the political world for this organization. As the archivist, as the person who is reading the history, NEA was very hesitant to get involved in political issues for a very long time.

RN: Yeah.

VS: This complete 180 to what you were doing with in the mid eighties, when you were running conventions into the nineties, and it sounds like hot-button political topics were a big part of what you had to deal with.

RN: They really were. Like I said, that was the stuff that kept you up at night. They were really exciting times. I don't know if – you probably are given names of people, but I really strongly urge you to talk to a guy name Michael Edwards. He knows everything about everything. He's still working, and he started in the NEA in 1980. He knows all that stuff, anything to do with politics. And that Irma Kramer, who is retired, I don't know how Erma's – Mike could probably tell you. But Irma Kramer used to be – she was the governance person for many years, and Bob Chanin, who was general counsel. Those three people are people that know more about the organization than anybody. There's a couple others Ken Melley, I don't know what Ken is doing.

VS: Actually, I just spoke to Ken. He was the first person I did my interviews with.

RN: Good, because Ken can tell you how he organized in the field. How's he doing? Is his health okay?

VS: Yeah, he seemed fine.

RN: Good.

VS: He seemed great, yeah.

RN: Great.

VS: I went out to visit him and we talked for about this long.

RN: A few years ago, I don't know, six or seven years ago, he told me he almost died, so I'm glad to hear he's okay.

VS: We didn't go into the details of his life, but he seemed fine.

RN: No, but if he's still going, he seemed fine, that's good to hear.

VS: He seemed fine and he was able to talk quite a bit.

RN: I don't know if you have any interest, but Michael Edwards, he is the man. He knows everything about everything. I don't know if there's things he wouldn't talk about, but he has a really good memory. In fact, he's like the NEA story. If anybody has a question, Michael will know the answer to it. He just knows stuff.

VS: So, as I mentioned, this is kind of a pilot project. But if it does end up working out, there's always – probably, would wait for people to retire, just might make it easier for them professionally to wait to talk about these things when they're not working there anymore.

RN: Well Irma Kramer and Bob Chanin retired. Bob is in his 80s and Irma's in her 80s. Melley, Kramer, Chanin, they were like best buddies. They probably shaped the

organization, those three people, as much as anybody. They named the auditorium after Bob Chanin when he retired. He was probably the smartest man I ever met. Not probably; the smartest man I ever met; brilliant guy. Argued before the Supreme Court several times, very articulate, and a really nice guy, very nice guy. He could cut you to shreds. He doesn't suffer fools lightly – what's the term – but a brilliant man. I don't know how he's doing, but I know he's probably now into his early 80s.

VS: Actually, if you don't mind, you just made me think of something, going back a step. When you were with legal services, one of the things I've come across in the records are amicus briefs that the NEA would file on behalf of, usually Supreme Court cases; there may have been lower court cases as well. Was it your office that would be writing the amicus briefs, or was it someone else?

RN: It was Bob Chanin's office.

VS: Oh, okay.

RN: We would work with them. I could be wrong about this, but again, the funding may have come through legal services, but it was Len Almond, my director, who was kind of like the – Chanin took Len under his wing. They had lots of time to discuss some of these issues. I think Chanin had a lot of latitude in terms of determining when or how we do on amicus briefs. I think for a while, he was the deputy executive director. Then he had a unique role where he was general counsel, but went to work for a law firm, and then still

was NEA general counsel, then retired from the law firm and came back for a little while. He was a brilliant guy. He would know every question you had asked about the merger, about the race issues; he would know all that.

VS: I'm going to check to keep him on my list, then.

RN: Down the road. Melley's a gold mine, too. Do you mind telling me anybody else you spoke with?

VS: You are the second, so Ken Melley, you, I'm talking to John Dunlop in two weeks, and I'm drawing a blank on the fourth name and then **Dorothy Massey**.

RN: Oh, yeah, Dorothy Massey. Oh, gosh.

VS: I'm trying to get in touch with her. I've kind of had a little bit of a bump. We made an appointment and then when I called to actually arrange it, she didn't remember that we made the appointment, so I'm not exactly sure what's going happen.

RN: Yeah, Dorothy's got to be up there, now. What a nice women. This doesn't have anything to do with anything, just you reminded me. Dorothy Massey – I am a straight shooter. I probably got sick ten days in my life at the NEA, never got sick – mostly sick for family, but not for me. But one day, Dorothy Massey and this woman, Barbara Stein and I, played hooky, went to a movie. It's so out of character for someone like me.

Dorothy had this really impish way about her, where she would got me to do a bad thing. For me, it's a bad thing. What a nice woman she was. Dunlop, another really, really bright guy. He will have a lot to tell you. He's like a professor, really bright, very articulate, very well spoken, probably do a crossword puzzle while he's talking to you. Great guy, so you're going to have a good time. I'm at the bottom of this barrel here, man.

VS: I don't know, this was actually very interesting. I feel like this was something that will have a lot interest for people.

[End of interview.]